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Working for the City

DDC announces its list of go-to architects



THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY'S MARINERS HARBOR BRANCH IN STATEN ISLAND, DESIGNED BY ATELIER PAGNAMENTA TORRIANI, WON A DESIGN EXCELLENCE AWARD THIS YEAR. COURTESY ATELIER PAGNAMENTA TORRIANI ARCHITECTS PLANNERS

The New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC) has announced its 2009 list of architects contracted under the Design and Construction Excellence program. Firms on the list are eligible to compete for projects overseen by the DDC. The program was initiated in 2005 under the direction of DDC Commissioner David J. Burney to shift the city's procurement method from price-based to quality-based selection.

Competition for these coveted contracts has become fiercer each time that the agency has updated its list, which happens every two years. In 2005, 178 firms applied. In 2007 that number grew to 237. This year 329 firms answered the RFP, vying for four fewer spots than were previously available. The DDC reduced the number of contracts due to a downturn in work projected over the next two years.

Firms on the list fall under two categories: those eligible for projects with construction estimates of \$15 million or less, and those eligible for projects with construction estimates of more than \$15 million. DDC limits the size of firms applying for the smaller budget positions to no more than ten professional staff. Out of 221 applicants for the smaller budget work, the agency issued 20 contracts, down from 24 in 2007. Here are the firms that made that list: Architecture Research Office; Atelier Pagnamenta Torriani Architects Planners; Audrey Matlock Architect; Belmont Freeman Architects; Bentel & Bentel, Architects/Planners; BWA|de.Sign (Basil Water Architects and de.Sign); Charles Rose Architects; Dean/Wolf Architects; Della Valle Bernheimer; Garrison Architects; Gray Organschi Architecture; Huff + Gooden Architects; Leeser Architecture; LTL Architects; Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects; Ogawa/Depardon Architects; Slade Architecture; Toshiko Mori Architect; Wallance + Hibbs Architects; and WorkAC. The DDC has no rules about only contracting firms based in New York City, as can be seen by the presence of Boston architect Charles Rose, and the New Haven-based Gray Organschi Architecture.

Out of 108 applicants for the larger budget work, the DDC handed out eight contracts, the same number as was awarded in 2007. Here are the firms that made that list: Selldorf Architects; Asymptote Architecture; BKSK Architects; Grimshaw Architects; Rogers Marvel Architects; Snøhetta; TEN Arquitectos; and Thomas Phifer and Partners.

At the time of this writing, all the contracts on the lists are pending registration with the city comptroller, which is a necessary step for all city contracts. ---- Aaron Seward